

Message Text

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ACTION EA-06

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FM AMEMBASSY SINGAPORE

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 4683

INFO AMEMBASSY KUALA LUMPUR

S E C R E T SECTION 1 OF 2 SINGAPORE 0973

LIMDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: OVIP (ROCKEFELLER, NELSON A.) SN

SUBJECT: VICE PRESIDENT'S VISIT TO SINGAPORE

SUMMARY: FOR REASONS CITED BELOW GOS HAS CHOSEN TO ELEVATE VICE PRESIDENT'S VISIT VIRTUALLY TO LEVEL OF STATE VISIT BY HEAD OF GOVERNMENT. EMBASSY BELIEVES P.M. LEE WILL PREFER TO DISCUSS BROAD POLICY QUESTIONS, AND WILL PROBABLY NOT RAISE BILATERAL ISSUES IN ANY DETAIL. HOWEVER, HE MAY EXPRESS SOME CONCERN THAT U.S. HAS NOT BEEN AS POSITIVE WITH RESPECT TO CERTAIN GOS REQUESTS FOR MILITARY ASSISTANCE AS HE HAD HOPED. BRIEFING PAPER COVERING MAJOR FEATURES OF U.S. - SINGAPORE MILITARY DIALOGUE AND BACKGROUND PAPER ON ECONOMIC RELATIONS AND U.S. INVESTMENT IN SINGAPORE SHOULD BE INCLUDED IN VICE PRESIDENT'S BRIEFING BOOK. END SUMMARY.

1. IN PREPARING BRIEFING MATERIAL FOR VICE PRESIDENT'S VISIT TO SINGAPORE, BELIEVE DEPARTMENT MAY FIND FOLLOWING OBSERVATIONS AND SUGGESTIONS OF SOME USE:

(A) GOS ATTITUDE TOWARD VISIT.

GOS RESPONDED QUICKLY AND FAVORABLY WHEN VISIT WAS FIRST BROACHED AND IS OBVIOUSLY VERY PLEASED

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THAT THE VICE PRESIDENT HAS INCLUDED SINGAPORE

ON HIS ITINERARY. ALTHOUGH EMBASSY INDICATED INITIALLY VISIT WOULD OF COURSE BE OFFICIAL, GOS HAS CHOSEN TO ELEVATE IT VIRTUALLY TO THE LEVEL OF A STATE VISIT BY HEAD OF GOVERNEMENT, INSISTING UPON FULL MILITARY HONORS AT THE AIRPORT, THE USE OF THE ISTANA AND THE HOLDING OF A FORMAL STATE BANQUET IN THE VICE PRESIDENT'S HONOR. FOLLOWING TWO FACTORS HAVE MOTIVATED GOS IN TREATING VISIT IN THIS FASHION.

(1) FIRST, SINCE FALL OF INDOCHINA, GOS HAS MOVED CLOSER TO U.S. AND HAS SOUGHT TO CONVINCE ASEAN COLLEAGUES, AND PROBABLY INDIRECTLY NORTH VIETNAM AND USSR AS WELL, THAT U.S. IS STILL VERY MUCH INVOLVED IN SEA. GOS HAS BEEN CONCERNED THAT RTG AND GOM TEND TO BE TOO FEARFUL OF THE DRV AND MIGHT YIELD TOO EASILY TO HANOI INTIMIDATION IN THE BELIEF THAT THE U.S. HAS WRITTEN OFF MAINLAND SEA. GOS BELIEVES THAT THAI, MALAYSIAN AND SINGAPORE ECONOMIES FAR OUTDISTANCE THOSE OF INDOCHINESE STATES, AND THAT IF THE ASEAN GOVERNMENTS ACT WITH CONFIDENCE, COMPETENCE AND COMPSURE, FOREIGN INVESTMENT WILL CONTINUE TO COME IN AND MAINTAIN THE NECESSARY STIMULUS TO KEEP THE ECONOMY OF THE REGION MOVING FORWARD. PRIME MINISTER LEE BELIEVES THAT AS LONG AS THE ASEAN COUNTRIES ARE THRIVING, INSURGENCY CAN BE KEPT IN CHECK. THUS, A WELL-PUBLICIZED, CORDIAL WELCOME TO THE VICE PRESIDENT SERVES GOS INTERESTS BY PROVIDING A VISIBLE DEMONSTRATION OF AMERICAN INTEREST AND CONTINUING INVOLVEMENT IN THE REGION.

(2) SECONDLY, GOS HAS EXPRESSED PRIVATELY SOME MISGIVINGS IN RECENT MONTHS THAT U.S. REGARDS INDONESIA AS THE "SHEET ANCHOR" OF ASEAN, AND THAT THE U.S. MAY BE INCLINED TO "DEAL" WITH ASEAN THROUGH INDONESIA, NOT
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TAKING INTO ACCOUNT SUFFICIENTLY THE VIEWS OF THE MAINLAND SEA GOVERNMENTS. GOS UNDOUBTEDLY NOTED THAT FOLLOWING HIS VISITS TO MANILA AND JAKARTA LAST YEAR, THE PRESIDENT SAID IN HONOLULU THAT HE REGRETTED TIME DID NOT PERMIT A VISIT TO THE OTHER ASEAN CAPITALS. THEREFORE, THE GOS IS ALMOST CERTAINLY PLEASED THAT THE

VICE PRESIDENT'S VISIT IS IN PART DESIGNED TO
CORRECT THIS OMISSION, AND HAS DECIDED TO
WELCOME THE VISIT IN THE SPIRIT IN WHICH IT
WAS PROPOSED.

(B) DISCUSSIONS WITH LEE KUAN YEW.

EMBASSY BELIEVES PRIME MINISTER LEE WILL REGARD HIS
MEETING WITH THE VICE PRESIDENT AS AN OPPORTUNITY
TO DISCUSS BROAD QUESTIONS OF POLICY. HE IS KEENLY
INTERESTED IN THE AMERICAN SCENE AND MAY BE EXPECTED
TO PROBE THE VICE PRESIDENT'S VIEWS IN SOME DEPTH
ON U.S. DOMESTIC POLICY DEVELOPMENTS, INCLUDING THE
LIKELY OUTCOME OF THE CONVENTIONS AND NOVEMBER
ELECTION AND THE FUTURE DIRECTION OF U.S.
FOREIGN POLICY IN SEA, WHERE HE WANTS THE U.S.
TO CONTINUE TO FLY THE FLAG. IT WOULD ALSO BE
CHARACTERISTIC OF LEE TO EXPOUND AT GREAT LENGTH
HIS CONCERN OVER WHAT HE REGARDS AS THE
INADEQUACIES OF U.S. FOREIGN POLICY, THE
DIFFICULTY OF RECONCILING ADMINISTRATION
PRONOUNCEMENTS WITH CONGRESSIONAL ACTION, THE
IMPLICATIONS OF ANGOLA, ETC.

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(C) BILATERAL ISSUES.

ON BALANCE, EMBASSY CONSIDERS IT UNLIKELY THAT LEE WILL RAISE BILATERAL ISSUES IN ANY DETAIL, E.G., THE SENKO OIL STORAGE FACILITIES. HOWEVER, IT IS POSSIBLE THAT HE WILL EXPRESS A GENERAL CONCERN THAT HIS REQUESTS FOR U.S. MILITARY TRAINING, ADVISORS AND EQUIPMENT HAVE NOT MET WITH AS POSITIVE A RESPONSE AS HE HAD HOPED. HE MENTIONED TO ASSISTANT SECRETARY HABIB LAST

DECEMBER SINGAPORE'S INABILITY TO OBTAIN C-130'S AT PREFERENTIAL PRICES, AND MIGHT BOTH BRING THIS ISSUE UP AGAIN AND RAISE QUESTION OF ABORTED COUNTERINSURGENCY COURSE. THEREFORE, THE VICE PRESIDENT SHOULD BE PROVIDED WITH A BRIEFING PAPER COVERING MAJOR FEATURES OF THE U.S.-SINGAPORE MILITARY DIALOGUE.

(D) POINTS VICE PRESIDENT MAY WISH TO RAISE.

(1) SUGGEST VICE PRESIDENT ASK HOW HE VIEWS THE OUTCOME OF THE SUMMIT MEETING OF ASEAN LEADERS IN BALI AND THE PROSPECTS OF FUTURE ASEAN
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COOPERATION.

(2) VICE PRESIDENT MAY WISH TO INQUIRE INTO THE CURRENT STATE OF SINGAPORE'S RELATIONS WITH MALAYSIA AND INDONESIA, AND WHETHER LEE IS SANGUINE OVER PROSPECTS OF CLOSER COOPERATION IN THE FUTURE.

(3) SEEK LEE KUAN YEW'S ESTIMATE OF NORTH VIETNAM'S INTENTIONS TOWARD THE AREA, ESPECIALLY IN THE LIGHT OF RECENT PRONOUNCEMENTS FROM HANOI ATTACKING THE ASEAN GOVERNMENTS.

(4) QUESTION LEE AS TO THE ROLE HE FEELS THE UNITED STATES SHOULD PROPERLY PLAY IN THE REGION IN THE LIGHT OF ALL THESE FACTORS.

(E) COURTESY POINTS. (FOR USE IN DISCUSSION WITH ACTING VP YEOH, PRIME MINISTER LEE OR PRESIDENT SHEARES)

(1) EXPRESS APPRECIATION FOR THE CONTINUING USE OF SINGAPORE'S HARBOR AND REPAIR FACILITIES BY SEVENTH FLEET SHIPS.

(2) CONGRATULATE LEE ON THE ABILITY OF THE

SINGAPORE ECONOMY TO COME THROUGH THE
RECENT INTERNATIONAL RECESSION WITH FLYING
COLORS (6.8 PERCENT GNP INCREASE IN 1974 AND
4.1 PERCENT IN 1975, LOW UNEMPLOYMENT AND
PROGRESS ON INFLATION FRONT.)

(3) COMMENT ON THE CLEANLINESS AND BEAUTY OF
SINGAPORE AND THE REMARKABLE ACCOMPLISHMENTS
OF THE PUBLIC HOUSING AND FAMILY PLANNING
PROGRAMS.

(4) COMPLIMENT LEE ON THE REALISTIC AND
ENERGETIC WAY THE GOS FACES UP TO ITS
PROBLEMS AND DEALS WITH THEM.

2. BELIEVE IT WOULD BE USEFUL IF VICE PRESIDENT'S BRIEFING
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BOOK INCLUDED A BACKGROUND PAPER ON U.S. - SINGAPORE ECONOMIC
RELATIONS, INCLUDING SIZE AND EXTENT OF U.S. INVESTMENT IN
SINGAPORE.
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